

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1-3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously presented) An isolated oligoribonucleotide consisting of two separate non-linked complementary oligoribonucleotide strands (dsRNA),

wherein the dsRNA is 21 nucleotides in length,

wherein the dsRNA does not comprise a full length RNA transcript of a mammalian target gene,

wherein one strand of the dsRNA is complementary to less than the full length of an RNA transcript of said mammalian target gene,

and wherein the dsRNA specifically inhibits the expression of said mammalian target gene.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 4, wherein the RNA transcript is a primary or a processed RNA.

7. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 4, wherein said dsRNA is modified so as to be resistant to RNA degradation.

8. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 4, wherein said one strand of said dsRNA is fully complementary to less than the full length of an RNA transcript of a mammalian target gene.

9. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 4 or 8, wherein said two separate complementary strands are fully complementary to each other.

10-15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently amended) ~~The dsRNA of claim 4 or 8;~~ An isolated oligoribonucleotide consisting of two separate complementary oligoribonucleotide strands (dsRNA), wherein said separate RNA strands are chemically linked to reduce dissociation of the two strands compared to non-linked RNA strands wherein the dsRNA is 21 nucleotides in length, wherein the dsRNA does not comprise a full length RNA transcript of a mammalian target gene, wherein one strand of the dsRNA is complementary to less than the full length of an RNA transcript of said mammalian target gene, and wherein the dsRNA specifically inhibits the expression of said mammalian target gene.

17. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein said chemical linkage is formed by a covalent bond or hydrogen bound.

18. (New) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein said one strand of said dsRNA is fully complementary to less than the full length of an RNA transcript of a mammalian target gene.